1: Linton E-8 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

for Europeans. The death rate is very high during infancy and early childhood and those who survive this perilous period are, necessarily, of strong physique. Old people are to be seen in all villages. It seemed to me that women were slightly more numerous than men, but I have no proof of this. The actual ages of individuals are hard to determine, for none of the Menabe know the dates of their births, but from incidents which they remember it is safe to say that persons of sixty to seventy years are fairly numerous, while a few reach eighty years and over.

Most of the old people seem to be mentally and physically alert. Senile dementia is almost unknown. Deafness is very rare, but blindness is not infrequent. I saw two cases of cataract and several other cases of blindness due to infections. The strength and activity of old people are often amazing. This holds true for other Malagasy tribes as well as the Tanala. A missionary living among the Betsileo told me that the mother of their maid servant, who was herself middle-aged, had decided some months before that she was too old to live without someone to wait on her. She had come to get the maid, walking over eighty miles. Two of my Menabe informants, who were both over seventy, seemed as active as young men and still did their full share of work in the rice fields. One of them was living in a neighboring village and regularly walked ten miles daily over hilly country, five miles each way, without suffering fatigue.

Old people continue the regular activities of adults until they become feeble or otherwise incapacitated. After this they assume the lighter duties of child tending. It seemed to me that the relations between children and old people were closer and more friendly than those between parent and child. The old people tell the children stories, show them how to make toys, supervise their games, etc. The children in turn wait on the old people willingly. There seem to be many friendships between old men and children who are not closely related to them. The children are taught to treat all old people with respect and habitually address them, even if they are strangers, as grandfather or grandmother.

Young adults are also respectful, as a rule, for disrespect would be considered a sign of ill breeding, but they have no superstitious reverence for age and I have heard young men make fun of old ones, although never to their faces. The middle-aged treat the old, except those of their immediate family, very much as equals. In village councils, etc., age in itself does not confer authority. A

middle-aged man of wealth and ability will receive more consideration than an old man who is not important.

Old men with numerous descendants occupy an enviable position. They exercise parental authority over both their children and grandchildren and are respected by non-relatives because of the power they wield. Their own children treat them with great consideration, for if they fail in their duties the father will revenge himself by giving away his property to other children or even outsiders. Old men fully realize the strength of their position and are often overbearing. I saw several instances of tension between fathers and grown sons and heard of a few cases in which sons had actually left home to escape their fathers' domination. This was said to be a recent development, due to the peace imposed by the French. It would have been impossible under primitive conditions and was still frowned on by the community. There is a distinct feeling that the care and expense involved in rearing a child are an investment which should be repaid by care of the parent in his old age.

Old women have less authority over their children than old men, but, if widowed, they will live with one of their married sons and take an active part in the direction of his household. The relation between mothers and grown sons seems much more friendly than that between fathers and sons, but there is sometimes friction between mothers and daughters-in-law. The authority of the mother over the daughter-in-law is not clearly defined, so the possibilities of conflict are increased. In a few cases mothers lived alone in small houses built near those of their married sons. I was told that they did this of their own free will.

Childless old people of both sexes have a lower status than those with children. They will be looked after by their closest kin, but if these are poor, or stingy, they may be neglected. However, they are never allowed to suffer real hardship. This is due less to affection than to the fear that their ghosts may revenge themselves on those who have neglected them.

In former times, old slaves were assured of support by their masters. Informants had never heard of selling a slave because he had become old or useless. They said that, in the first place, no one would buy him and, in the second, such a sale would be a disgrace to his master. The fear of vengeance from his ghost also helped to secure good treatment for him. As most slaves had families, the problem rarely arose.